



# ATF News

**Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives  
Louisville Field Division**

Contact: ATF PIO Craig W. Roegner  
Office: (502) 753-3556  
Cell: (502) 773-2614  
Email: [LouisDiv@atf.gov](mailto:LouisDiv@atf.gov)

For Immediate Release  
April 29, 2008

## **ATF AGENTS, LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TAKE AIM ON GUN CRIMES IN THE RIVER CITY AREA OF WEST VIRGINIA**

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. — Federal and local law enforcement authorities have taken aim on gun crime in the greater Huntington, W.Va. area. Special Agent in Charge Paul J. Vido of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Louisville Field Division, along with Sheriff Kim Wolfe of the Cabell County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) and Chief W. H. "Skip" Holbrook of the Huntington Police Department (HPD), jointly announced the formation of the River City Area Gun Crimes Task Force.

"Today, more than ever, policing is a team effort if we are going to bring violent crime under control in our communities," said Vido. "ATF is grateful for Sheriff Wolfe's and Chief Holbrook's commitment to this battle by supplying investigators and a secure work space for the task force."

CCSO Chief Deputy Jim Scheidler, one of the architects of this task force concept, noted that, "Our goal is to stifle the growth of the violent drug trade that currently exists in our community. Our intelligence has determined that guns are not only the tools used against victims of crimes, but stolen firearms from home burglaries are also used to financially fuel the illegal drug trade."

The focus of the task force will be to curb gun violence by investigating armed violent offenders; stopping the flow of firearms to prohibited persons, such as illegal drug traffickers; reducing the number of firearms thefts; and stopping the flow of firearms from the Huntington area into surrounding major cities.

The task force is made up of four full-time ATF and local criminal investigators and has been strategically co-located with the Huntington Police Department at 675 10th Street in Huntington. This location will ensure the smooth flow of communication between the Huntington Police Department's drug investigators, the detective's bureau, and members of this new task force.

"The most significant law enforcement and social issue facing Huntington is the illegal drug trade," said Holbrook. "The illegal drug trade contributes to most of the other crime issues within the city. The following crime statistics took place in 2007 and were

— more —

perpetrated by individuals fueling their drug habit and/or furthering the local drug trade: 1,168 burglaries, 194 robberies and the seizure of 194 firearms.”

The River City Area Gun Crimes Task Force adopted its name as a result of the area’s port city heritage. The City of Huntington and Cabell County are located on the shores of the Ohio River. During the age when steam boats ruled the waterways, this area of West Virginia was commonly known to riverboat captains as the River City area.

“Crimes that occur in the greater Huntington area are no longer just a local issue. Crime guns and other property are now being recovered on a national level. Those who commit crimes locally then run back to Detroit or Columbus and use these stolen guns to commit other crimes. Violent criminals like these will be among the first targets of this new gun crimes task force,” said Scheidler.

A review of the ATF firearm recovery data compiled from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2006, for Cabell County revealed:

- Dangerous drugs is the crime most associated with firearms recoveries;
- Handguns are the number one type of crime gun recovered;
- Firearms are mostly recovered from criminals associated with the illegal drug trade;
- Those individuals involved in the illegal drug trade cannot legally possess a firearm under federal law.

“These statistics reinforce what law enforcement has known for years — handguns are the weapons of choice for drug dealers and their criminal associates,” added Vido.

A key component of ATF’s enforcement mission is tracing firearms on behalf of thousands of federal, state, local and foreign law enforcement agencies. ATF’s National Tracing Center located in Martinsburg, W.Va., provides recovery data that tracks the transfer of a firearm from the importer or manufacturer to the gun’s first purchaser. This information can assist law enforcement investigators in ultimately pinpointing the individual(s) who used the gun to commit a violent crime.

Anyone with information involving firearms trafficking, armed drug trafficking, stolen firearms or potential firearms violations occurring in the Cabell-Huntington, W.Va., area please contact the **River City Gun Crimes Task Force** at **(304) 696-5510**. **All calls will be kept strictly confidential.**

More information on ATF and its programs can be found at [www.atf.gov](http://www.atf.gov).

###